

LAY LEADERSHIP AREA OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

Purpose:

Lay Leadership falls under the 4 areas of ministry in the SC UMC Conference Connectional Ministries program. Lay Leadership serves to unite laity across the Conference and to encourage laity to be engaged in their local church and active in the district. From the smallest membership churches to larger membership churches, all churches are important.

Key moments from the previous year:

Lay Servant Ministries has seen an increased interest in the CLM (Certified Lay Minister) training program over the past year. Annie Crocker, CLM, and Spartanburg LSM Director, presented a testimony as the first CLM in SC before the CLM Network Conference/AC Directors LSM meeting in Nashville.

United Women in Faith were busy this year with activities to meet their \$10,000 challenge to the Legacy Endowment Fund. They contributed \$112, 947.57 over the last 9 years. UWF awarded 5 Presidential Scholarships to young ladies to assist with their education. The Spiritual Growth Event was held in April with over 200 attendees.

MenNMinistry had 4 District "Teaching Church" events this past year. These events kept men connected to each other and God. A conference was held in February at Journey Church with 180 men attending. The men were encouraged to stay close to God and be better husbands, fathers, brothers, and uncles.

Youth around the Conference enjoyed Revolution and Immerse, two very well attended events. A retreat for youth was held at Asbury. SC Ministries with Young People (SCMYO) sponsored a coaching cohort to equip youth leaders. A "Collaborative Youth Ministry Think Tank" event was held for youth leaders.

Laity were given the opportunity to spend time with Bishop Holston as he traveled to each district. We are grateful for all the laity who give of their time and talents through Lay Servant Ministries, United Women in Faith, MenNMinistry, District Lay Leaders, our youth, and our older adults.

Objectives for the coming year:

Continue our work to engage and equip the laity across the Annual Conference with the resources and information needed to assist local churches.

Continue to partner with groups in our local communities and share the love of Jesus Christ.

Continue to embrace our new reality and work actively to 'be the church' wherever we are.

Continue to find avenues to bring churches and local communities to the table to focus on mission, ministry, and the response to racism and homelessness.

Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:

If you take away nothing from this report, know this:

We must continue to embrace where we are as a United Methodist Church and Conference. The church is still the church. We are called to be disciples and to show the love of Christ to others. We must continue to be diligent in our missions and ministries. There are persons around us who need to hear the Gospel. Let us continue to be the disciple God calls us to be.

Narrative:

These are extraordinary times in our church and our world. As we navigate the future, may we show God’s love and light to others. Jesus said we are to “love one another as I have loved you.” May the world see us as people who love and respect each other even though we may not all agree on a variety of issues. May we live out our faith in Christ, by impacting lives, and being living testimonies of His love.

Respectfully submitted:

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We appreciate the support our District Lay Leaders (DLL) give to the twelve districts. If you do not know your DLL, take the time to get to know them and invite them to your church. Serving presently are Jeff Fogle, Anderson, Gillis McAllister, Charleston, Michael Jennings, Columbia, Brenda Fleming, Florence, Chandra Dillard, Greenville, Tony Watson, Greenwood, Sarah Johnson, Hartsville, Michael Toms, Marion, Shelia Shanklin, Orangeburg, Bob James, Rock Hill, Rick Hammett, Spartanburg and Wally Cole, Walterboro. At this Annual Conference we celebrate and give thanks for the service given by Jeff Fogle, Tony Watson, Shelia Shakin, Rick Hammett, and Sarah Johnson as they have fulfilled their time of service or are rotating off to pursue other avenues of service. We will welcome new DLLs in these areas after June 2024. Jeff Fogle has served as the Associate Conference Lay Leader, Cassie Watson as the Secretary of Lay Leadership, and Lisa Fusco as the Chairperson of Lay Leadership Advisory Board. We are grateful for their service.

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*A personal note: I want to thank the laity and clergy of the South Carolina Annual Conference for their support and encouragement over these last 12 years during my time serving as your Conference Lay Leader. It has been one of the honors of my life to represent the South Carolina UMC in so many ways and venues across our Annual Conference and the General Conference. Thank you for welcoming me into your churches and groups. May God continue to the focus of all we say and do.*

*– Barbara Ware*